

Augsburg Swensk Skola (Burstrom Chapel)
North side of Oak Hill Road, about 1/8
mile east of intersection with U. S.
Route #12
Chesterton Vicinity
Porter County
Indiana

HABS No. IND-48

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. IND-48

AUGSBURG SWENSK SKOLA (BURSTROM CHAPEL)

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Location: North side of Oak Hill Road, about 1/8 mile east of intersection with U. S. Route #12 (Township 37 W.N., Range 6 W, Section 27 S.W. of N.E. 1/4), Chesterton Vicinity, Porter County, Indiana.

Present Owner: Swedish Lutheran Church, Bethlehem Congregation, Chesterton, Indiana. Used as a sanctuary.

Statement of Significance: This church structure, built by nineteenth-century Swedish immigrants, reflects the church architecture tradition of the Scandinavian nations in its off-center placing of the battered structure that houses the bell. In Sweden these bell structures were left open to the weather; the Augsburg Swensk Skola bell structure is enclosed and the lower space serves as tool house and wood storage area. The structure is an adaptation of a traditional architectural form, dating from the middle ages, to the needs of a particular locality.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The structure was donated to the Bethlehem Congregation by Frederick Burstrom in 1880. The site was donated by John P. Johnson at this time. The site was expanded in 1956 by a donation of 1.9 acres by four families: Mr. and Mrs. John Longlett, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Edwards, and Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Christopherson.
2. Date of erection: 1880.
3. Builder: Frederick Burstrom.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: None known.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: The foundation system was repaired by Reginald Larson in 1931. The porch was repaired and altered by the addition of a canopy in 1934. The sign attached to the canopy is original and had been attached to the wall above the front door. (This canopy is not indicated in the HABS measured drawings of 1964.)

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: The structure served as a Bible School for the Swedish immigrants who settled and developed the area. While no specific event occurred here, it does represent the customs of the people who inhabited the area as pioneers in the nineteenth century.
- C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: The private photograph collections of residents of the community.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

- 1. Architectural interest and merit: See Statement of Significance, page 1 of this report.
- 2. Condition of fabric: Well maintained.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

- 1. Over-all dimensions: One story, rectangular plan, about 15' x 25'.
- 2. Foundations: Brick.
- 3. Wall construction: Wooden balloon frame construction sheathed in painted clapboard.
- 4. Porch: A small, wooden, pitched-roof canopy, constructed in 1934, now partially covers the front entry and the simple, wooden, four-step porch.
- 5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Wooden frames and four-panel doors.
 - b. Windows: Double-hung sash, four-over-four lights, with wooden louvered shutters.
- 6. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof covered with wooden shingles.
 - b. Cornice: A simple wooden cornice with no distinguishing details.
- 7. Chimneys: Brick chimney at gable ridge.

C. Technical Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plan: One room with square, attached bell tower.

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2. Stairways: None.
3. Flooring: Wooden.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Lath and plaster.
5. Doorways: Wooden frame and four-panel doors.
6. Trim: Simple wooden trim.
7. Hardware: Undistinguished.
8. Lighting: Kerosene chandelier fixture.
9. Heating: Cast-iron stove.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The building faces south on a rural, wooded site with a small cemetery.
2. Enclosures: None.
3. Outbuildings: None.
4. Walks: None.
5. Landscaping: The building is located near a large grove of tall oak trees.

Prepared by Harold A. Nelson
Architect
Chicago, Illinois
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